

MOTHER'S DAY WISHES

(Mr. BANKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish my mom a happy 60th birthday. I couldn't ask for a better mom. Most likely her favorite son, I have known each and every day of my life that my mom loves me and she is proud of me.

My mom hasn't always had it easy. She has worked hard all of her life, both as a cook in a nursing home for nearly 40 years and by holding it all together at home as she cared for my dad, my two brothers, and me.

What we need now more than ever is more moms like my mom, and as we celebrate Mother's Day this weekend, we honor our moms and say thank you for their tireless work and sacrifices.

Motherhood is a full-time job and a lifetime commitment, but the impact that mothers make in the lives of their children is profound.

I am grateful for all of the moms in my life, including my extraordinary wife, Amanda, who is raising three extraordinary little girls.

Mr. Speaker, I wish my mom a happy birthday and wish all the mothers in northeast Indiana and across our country a happy Mother's Day on Sunday.

PRESIDENT TRUMP IS IN GOOD COMPANY

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, here are some excerpts from the book, "Presidential Courage," by Michael Beschloss that might sound familiar:

"Andrew Jackson said, 'I was born for the storm, and calm does not suit me.'"

"Warned that some decision of his would risk a public clamor, Jackson once said, 'I care nothing about clamors, sir. . . . I do precisely what I think just and right.'"

"Theodore Roosevelt genuinely thought of himself as a gladiator against evil. . . . Like Andrew Jackson, he was taking a large risk by challenging the citadels of wealth and power."

"T.R. boasted that the 'farmers, mechanics, small tradesmen, hardworking professional men' all considered him 'their President'. . . ."

"Roosevelt had always inveighed against the 'lies' in the press 'as foul and dirty . . . as ever was made by any dog.'"

To me, President Trump is carrying on the legacies of Presidents Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO SHERRY A. MITCHELL

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, today, May 7, is my wife's birthday. It may seem like a small thing to many, but it is hard to describe the sacrifice and commitment that it takes to be the spouse of someone who serves in government—the additional things she takes on when Dad is not home, the fun and games when the school calls, or the text message you get: Where did you leave whatever? I need to find it.

So, today, I want to briefly say to my spouse, to Sherry: Thank you very much for understanding my need to serve and joining me in that effort in serving in the House. Happy birthday, and I will see you at the end of the week.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BANKS of Indiana). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1630

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at 4 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Muriel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT CORRECTION ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4910) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4910

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act".

SEC. 2. PROVISION OF OUTER BURIAL RECEPTACLES FOR REMAINS BURIED IN NATIONAL PARKS.

Section 2306(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting "(A)" before "The Secretary of Veterans";

(B) in subparagraph (A), as designated by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, by striking "The Secretary of the Army" and inserting the following:

"(B) The Secretary of the Army"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) The Secretary of the Interior shall provide an outer burial receptacle for each such a grave in an open national cemetery administered by the National Park Service.";

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking "or in the Arlington National Cemetery" and inserting ", in the Arlington National Cemetery, or in a national cemetery administered by the National Park Service"; and

(B) by striking "or Secretary of the Army" and inserting ", the Secretary of the Army, or the Secretary of the Interior";

(3) in paragraph (3)(B)(ii), by striking "or, with respect to Arlington National Cemetery, the Secretary of the Army" and inserting "or the Secretary of the Army with respect to Arlington National Cemetery or the Secretary of the Interior with respect to a national cemetery administered by the National Park Service"; and

(4) in paragraph (4), by striking "or, with respect to Arlington National Cemetery, the Secretary of the Army" and inserting "or the Secretary of the Army with respect to Arlington National Cemetery or the Secretary of the Interior with respect to a national cemetery administered by the National Park Service".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4910, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act, which was introduced by Representative SCOTT of Georgia.

Current law requires VA to provide an outer burial receptacle for each new grave in a cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration. H.R. 4910 would extend this benefit to veterans who will be interred in cemeteries under the control of the National Park Service.

This bill only impacts two cemeteries within the National Park Service that are open to new interments. One of these cemeteries, the Andrew

Johnson National Cemetery, is in my home district in Tennessee and has a fascinating story.

Andrew Johnson served Tennessee as a Congressman, a Governor, and a Senator. He was also Abraham Lincoln's Vice President in 1865 and was sworn in as President after Lincoln's assassination. When he died in 1857, he was buried on the land that is now the Andrew Johnson National Cemetery.

The land remained in his family until the War Department acquired it in 1906. Finally, the jurisdiction of the cemetery was transferred to the National Park Service in 1942. Now the cemetery provides a final resting place for veterans who served our Nation since the Civil War, and it is still accepting new burials.

Veterans and their family members who choose to be buried in Andrew Johnson National Cemetery, or any other National Park Service cemetery, should receive the same benefits as those who are buried in VA cemeteries.

The manager's amendment incorporates some technical changes suggested by the National Park Service and is identical to S. 2372, which was introduced by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman ISAKSON, and passed the Senate by unanimous consent on March 1, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP), chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, for helping to expedite the consideration of the bill today.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4910, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, March 27, 2018.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act, authored by Congressman Austin Scott. This bill contains provisions under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this bill before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, I will agree that the Committee on Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of the bill. I do so with the understanding that this action does not affect the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources, and that the Committee reserves its authority to seek conferees on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this, or any similar legislation. I ask that you support any such request.

I also ask that a copy of this letter and your response be included in the report for the bill and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERAN'S AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 4, 2018.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4910.

I appreciate the House Natural Resources Committee's waiver of consideration of provisions under its jurisdiction and its subject matter. I acknowledge that the waiver was granted only to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 4910, and does not in any way waive or diminish the House Natural Resources Committee's jurisdictional interests over this legislation or similar legislation. I will support a request from the House Committee on Natural Resources for appointment to any House-Senate conference on H.R. 4910. Finally, I will also support your request to include a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Again, thank you for your assistance with these matters.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act, as amended, requires the Secretary of the Interior to provide an outer burial receptacle for each new grave in an open cemetery under the control of the National Park Service. The National Park Service controls 14 national cemeteries, two that are still active. They are Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, veterans who want to be buried at these two cemeteries currently must pay the cost of their own outer burial receptacle, yet veterans buried in national or State cemeteries controlled by the VA's National Cemetery Administration are provided such at no cost.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to promulgate rules and regulations establishing the cost that must be reimbursed to the Department of the Interior by survivors. The survivors will then be reimbursed for the cost through a VA voucher. It has already passed the Senate, and I urge its passage today by the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act. If enacted, H.R. 4910 would require the U.S. Department of the Interior to provide outer burial receptacles, also known as grave liners, for veterans buried in cemeteries under the control of the National Park Service.

Current law requires that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs provide an outer burial receptacle to a veteran buried in a national cemetery under the control of the National Cem-

etry Administration, which is a branch of the Veterans Administration. Additionally, the VA can provide a reimbursement if the family chooses to purchase a liner in lieu of the government-furnished grave liner.

However, cemeteries under the control of the National Park Service are not covered by this statute, and neither the VA nor the National Park Service currently are able to provide this benefit for veterans buried in those cemeteries.

The Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act simply amends the law to require the Department of the Interior to provide an outer burial receptacle for each new veteran's grave in a national cemetery under the control of the National Park Service, just as would be provided if they were buried under the Veterans Administration.

This bill also provides for the reimbursement of a veteran's survivors who provide a privately purchased outer burial receptacle for use in a National Park Service cemetery.

Of the 14 national cemeteries controlled by the National Park Service, two are still active: Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia, which my colleague Mr. BISHOP currently represents, and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee.

I am pleased to have introduced this bipartisan, commonsense legislation alongside my friend, fellow Georgian, and chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON, to ensure our veterans receive equal burial benefits, regardless of where they are laid to rest.

It is now more important than ever to close the gap in benefits for veterans who are buried in cemeteries managed by the National Park Service. In doing so, we will ensure that all veterans and their families are receiving the benefits and respect they have rightly earned.

I urge support from my colleagues on this bipartisan measure and commonsense piece of legislation.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), my good friend.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act. I joined my fellow Georgia Congressman AUSTIN SCOTT to introduce this bipartisan legislation to ensure that all of our veteran families receive the benefits that they have earned.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership in bringing this bill to the floor, and I thank all of my colleagues for their help in moving it forward.

Mr. Speaker, Andersonville, which is one of the two remaining National Park Service cemeteries, has a very, very interesting and unique history. Andersonville was the site of a Civil War prisoner of war camp, and, interestingly enough, it held prisoners of war for both the Union and the Confederates. Unfortunately, because of the

unsanitary conditions, thousands of veterans, both Union and Confederate, died at Andersonville.

Of course, in more recent years, Andersonville has been designated as the National Prisoner of War Memorial for our country, and, in that stead, we erected and funded the National Prisoner of War Museum, which is located on the grounds of Andersonville. The facilities there are controlled totally by the National Park Service.

Currently, when veterans are buried in some of the Federal cemeteries, as you have heard, a number of the families are left to pay the burial costs that typically would be afforded them under other circumstances.

Current law requires that when a veteran is buried in a national cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration, that the VA will provide an outer burial receptacle, known in other terms as a grave liner, or it will provide reimbursement to the family for purchase.

However, the current law inexplicably excludes national cemeteries that are under the control of the National Park Service. The Andersonville National Cemetery, located in my district, is one of the two remaining national cemeteries controlled by the National Park Service.

Today, we are taking steps for Congress to correct this oversight and to ensure that veterans buried in cemeteries controlled by the National Park Service, and their families, are provided all of the benefits to which they are entitled, not only for my district but for all of our veterans and their families who have selflessly served our country.

I applaud Senator ISAKSON's successful effort to push this legislation through the Senate under unanimous consent. It is now time for the House to take action, and by voting for this legislation, we can fix this oversight and ensure that all of our veterans and their families are provided appropriate benefits in all of our Federal cemeteries.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4910, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation of Mr. SCOTT and Mr. BISHOP, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4910, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SERVICEMEMBER FAMILY BURIAL ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4335) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for headstones and markers for, and interment in national cemeteries of, deceased spouses and dependent children of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4335

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Servicemember Family Burial Act".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION OF HEADSTONES AND MARKERS FOR, AND INTERMENT IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES OF, SPOUSES AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY.

(a) HEADSTONES AND MARKERS.—Section 2306(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “, or the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty under conditions other than dishonorable, as shown by a statement from a general court-martial convening authority, at the time of the spouse's death if such death occurs before October 1, 2024” after “veteran”; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), by inserting “, or the eligible dependent child of a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty under conditions other than dishonorable, as shown by a statement from a general court-martial convening authority, at the time of the child's death if such death occurs before October 1, 2024” after “veteran”.

(b) INTERMENT IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.—Section 2402(a)(5) of such title is amended by inserting “, and the spouse, minor child, and, in the discretion of the Secretary, unmarried adult child of a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty under conditions other than dishonorable, as shown by a statement from a general court-martial convening authority, at the time of the spouse's or child's death if such death occurs before October 1, 2024” after “paragraph (7)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4335, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4335, the Servicemember Family Burial Act, which was introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), a member of our committee.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation allows for a veteran's spouse, minor children, and certain other dependents to be interred in a VA national cemetery, even while the veteran is still alive. This ensures that a family may be laid to rest together if the veteran chooses to use a national cemetery.

But there is an unfortunate gap in the law that prevents Active-Duty servicemembers from burying their loved ones in a VA national cemetery. Mr. CORREA's bill would extend VA burial benefits to Active-Duty servicemembers who lose their family members before they leave the military.

To comply with budgeting rules, the manager's amendment would sunset this bill on September 30, 2024.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1645

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, when the VA provides burial and headstones or markers for eligible family members who predecease Active-Duty servicemembers, it is always under tragic and difficult circumstances.

Of course we want to provide these benefits as seamlessly as possible so our servicemembers can move on with their lives. This bill codifies current practice to ensure VA's process of handling these issues with dignity, sensitivity, and compassion.

I want to thank the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee Chairman MIKE BOST and Ranking Member ELIZABETH ESTY for their part in supporting and helping to bring this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4335, the Servicemember Family Burial Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this commonsense bill, H.R. 4335, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4335, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.